Message

From: Deegan, Dave [Deegan.Dave@epa.gov]
Sent: 10/19/2020 8:52:38 PM
To: R1 Executives All [R1ExecutivesALL@epa.gov]
Subject: FW: Daily News Clips: Afternoon Edition, 10/19/20

From: Kibilov, Nicholas
Sent: Monday, October 19, 2020 4:52:30 PM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: AO OPA OMR CLIPS
Subject: Daily News Clips: Afternoon Edition, 10/19/20

Daily News Clips: October 19, 2020 (afternoon edition)

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NFRC Meets Virtually; EPA and DOE Outline Updates Involving Fenestration
https://www.dwmmag.com/nfrc-meets-virtually-epa-and-doe-outline-updates-involving-fenestration/
October 19th, 2020 by Tara Taffera

The National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC) is hosting its fall membership meetings this week—virtually of course—and there were several important updates for companies involved in manufacturing or selling doors and windows. Officials from both the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) offered an update on activities as they pertain to fenestration.

Doug Anderson, program manager for EPA Energy Star windows, doors and skylights, reported on the progress made on "a possible Version 7."

"It's been going slow," said Anderson, adding, "It's been difficult data to gather," pointing out that COVID-19 hasn't helped in these efforts.

Anderson showed market data based on the Certified Product Directory (CPD) database which highlights that market share for Energy Star remains high.

"We have the highest market share in the North if you look at it by climate zone," he said, pointing out that the data is from 2018—the latest available.
Ongoing research regarding a possible Version 7 includes a look at cost data methodology where information is being collected from manufacturers, retailers and wholesalers.
"It's a slow process as companies don't want to share that data," he added.
Anderson expects a first draft to be published at the end of 2020 or the first quarter of 2021.

Mark LaFrance, windows technology manager on the emerging technologies team at DOE, presented what he said were some great opportunities for window companies.

"Three weeks ago we learned of a financial opportunity … There is $80 million dollars available for research and development, and this includes research for window technologies," said LaFrance. "I would like you to make me extremely busy by getting your proposals in. We usually don't have a lot of opportunities for windows so you should take advantage of this."

Another opportunity he mentioned includes the fact that DOE "is going to start working with utility programs to get them to start working with thin triple pane windows. This is a new opportunity for manufacturers to get involved," he said.

"These are areas where the industry can lead and increase the market value to the industry."

The NFRC meeting continues through Wednesday.

For more info about the Funding Opportunity Announcement mentioned by LaFrance and to submit an application, CLICK HERE. Concepts must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. Eastern on Thursday, November 5 to be eligible to submit a full application.

California Government Gives Directives only Electric Cars Retailed by 2035
https://thedailyphiladelphian.com/energy/84/california-government-gives-directives-only-electric-cars-retailed-by-2035/
Byadmin
OCT 19, 2020

The governor of California, sir Gavin Newsom contracted a new government command on the 23rd of September 2020, asking that every passenger vehicle to be retailed in the country should be free from pollution. The law agreed on the store of Mustang of the Ford Mustang Mach-E, with electric cars developed by Audi, Honda, and Tesla. Furthermore, the contract got accepted by Mary Nichols, who chairs the California Air Resources Board. The governor also stated that this was the most crucial phase the country took to ensure the end of climate change.

According to experts, they say that the mission of the order is attainable. Nick Albanese, a scientist with Bloomberg New Energy Finance, mentioned that California's target is overwhelming but viable. Moreover, a prominent website shows that even before signing the mandate, the projection passengers Electric cars to account for was 52% of the total number of U.S. commuter truck deals in 2035 and 61%in the year 2040. However, with the actual time being 15 years to come, experts project that the order can have discussions and refining.

A possible concern for California is Trump's management, which has filed a case for the state over its assumption that the EPA has the full jurisdiction to control vehicle radiations. When we look at superiority, the California Air Resources Board has been there for many years, from 1967. This period is Thirty-Six months before the origin of EPA. Also, California has many strict pollution and emission laws than EPA. Additionally, California has old-time records of getting support from the National government, permitting it to bring on board stringent rules. Agreeing to an article drafted in the year 2019 argued that Washington, D.C., and other 12 Cities follow California's principles in enrolling strict fuel pollution regulations.

A challenge that will arise during the implementation of this mandate will be the availability of charging spots. Individuals buying Electric cars need a dependable and quick charging system, which will manage to power their vehicles in half an hour. According to Jeff Skobin, the COO of a firm that runs a group of electric truck chargers argued that all California citizens have entrée to one of his organization that deals with charging electric cars. Moreover, he said that the station is a 15-minute ride from home. Another milestone is the power grid. Also, California has extended periods of a blackout, and therefore, scientists differ that Electric Cars will add to this challenge.

Urgent Deadline for Substantiating Inventory Reset Chemical Identity Confidentiality Claims
https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/urgent-deadline-for-substantiating-98198/
By Ryan Carra, Mark Duvall, Sarah Kettenmann, Jack Zietman

19 Oct 2020

Inventory Reset reporting under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) seems like years ago, because it was – Form A's were due February 7, 2018 for manufacturers and October 5, 2018 for processors. Companies are now likely focused on meeting the November 30, 2020 deadline for reporting under the Chemical Data Reporting rule (CDR).

However, companies that claimed chemical identities confidential on Form A's may still have substantiation requirements, regardless of whether they submitted substantiations at the time or not. This is because EPA allowed companies to substantiate their claims "later" – and "later" is now in just two weeks. EPA also changed the rules for substantiating CBI claims in connection with Form A's earlier this year. Those confidential business information (CBI) claims may be in jeopardy unless companies act by November 1, 2020.

EPA has some guidance on its website about this requirement, but this alert provides more information.

Inventory Reset Remembered

In the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act (enacted in 2016), Congress amended TSCA to require EPA to designate chemical substances on the TSCA Inventory as either "active" or "inactive," based on mandatory reporting by manufacturers and optional reporting by processors. This requirement, TSCA § 8(b)(4), was generally known at "Inventory Reset." Reporting companies could request that substances already on the confidential portion of the TSCA Inventory be kept confidential. As amended, § 14(c)(3) requires substantiation of CBI claims in accordance with EPA rules.

Under TSCA § 8(b)(4)(D)(i), companies submitting requests for continued CBI treatment of chemical identities on the confidential portion of the Inventory had three options for substantiating those claims. First, they could defer substantiation until required to do so by a rule that EPA was directed to adopt. Second, they could substantiate their CBI claims at the time they submitted their Form A's. Third, they could rely on substantiations they had submitted within the previous five years.

In 2017, EPA adopted a rule, entitled TSCA Inventory Notification (Active-Inactive) Requirements, 40 C.F.R. Part 710, Subpart B. EPA offered those three options for substantiating CBI claims for confidential chemical identities. Under any of these options, substantiations had to answer the questions in 40 C.F.R. § 710.35(c).

Companies That Deferred Substantiating Their Chemical Identity CBI Claims

TSCA § 8(b)(4)(C) and (D) required EPA to adopt a rule for reviewing CBI claims for chemical identities submitted under Inventory Reset. EPA published the CBI Review Rule in March 2020 as 40 C.F.R. Part 710, Subpart C. It established November 1, 2020, as the due date for all substantiations. 40 C.F.R. § 710.47(a).

Thus, a company that made a chemical identity CBI claim on a Form A, but deferred substantiation until later, must submit its substantiation for that claim by November 1. In doing so, it must answer all the questions in 40 C.F.R. § 710.45(b).

Companies That Substantiated Their CBI Claims for Chemical Identities During Inventory Reset

Companies that substantiated their CBI claims at the time that they submitted their Form A's may nevertheless still have to complete the substantiation of their claims by November 1. This is because EPA recently added to the requirements for substantiations, and those additions are applicable even to the past substantiations.

One of the statutory requirements for substantiating CBI claims, TSCA § 14(c)(1)(B)(iv), is that the submitter has "a reasonable basis to believe that the information is not readily discoverable through reverse engineering."

The 2017 EPA rule's substantiation questions did not address reverse engineering. Instead, submitters were required to certify that, "I have a reasonable basis to believe that the information is not readily discoverable through reverse engineering."

An NGO challenged this omission of substantiation questions on reverse engineering, as well as other aspects of the rule. In EDF v. EPA, 923 F.3d 446 (D.C. Cir. 2018), a court found that the rule was arbitrary and capricious for failing to require substantiation of the reverse engineering criterion, although it rejected all the other NGO arguments.

As a result of this court decision, EPA included the following questions on reverse engineering in the March 2020 CBI Review Rule, 40 C.F.R. § 710.45(b):

(6) Does this particular chemical substance leave the site of manufacture (including import) or processing in any form, e.g., as a product, effluent, or emission? If yes, please explain what measures have been taken, if any, to guard against the discovery of its identity.

(7) If the chemical substance leaves the site in a form that is available to the public or your competitors, can the chemical identity be readily discovered by analysis of the substance (e.g., product, effluent, or emission), in light of existing technologies and any costs, difficulties, or limitations associated with such technologies? Please explain why or why not.

The CBI Review Rule also added those questions to the substantiation questions in Subpart B. 40 C.F.R. § 710.37(c)(2)(ii) and (iii). The Inventory Reset regulations required answers to all the questions in § 710.37(c):

Answers that do not include the answers to all applicable questions in paragraph (c) of this section will not be deemed to be substantiations made under the TSCA section (8)(b)(4)(D)(i) requirement.

40 C.F.R. § 710.37(a)(1). Thus, even though the two added questions were not included at the time of Form A submissions, submitters must address them now if they have not already done so.

The CBI Review Rule also cautions that submitters with previous substantiations must answer these two questions:

Any person who completed the voluntary substantiation process set forth in § 710.37(a)(1) is exempt from the substantiation requirement of this subpart pertaining to the submission of answers to the questions in § 710.45(b)(1) through (6). All remaining requirements of § 710.45 must be met in accordance with the deadline specified in § 710.47(a), including the requirement to submit answers to the questions in § 710.45(b)(7) and (8), signed and dated by an authorized official, and to complete the certification statement in § 710.37(e).

40 C.F.R. § 710.43(b)(1).

Accordingly, persons who submitted substantiations for Inventory Reset along with their Form A's may need to supplement those substantiations by answering these two questions. Those supplemental substantiations are due by November 1, 2020. 40 C.F.R. § 710.47(a).

Companies That Relied on Pre-Inventory Reset Substantiations

Previous substantiations within the past five years that did answer the two questions need not do so again. 40 C.F.R. § 710.43(b)(2). Similar questions have long been part of the PMN and CDR regulations on substantiating chemical identity CBI claims. 40 C.F.R. §§ 720.85(b)(3)(iv)(H), (I), 711.30(c)(2), (3). Thus, it is possible that previous substantiations did include answers to those questions. Inventory Reset submitters that relied on previous substantiations should check to see if those questions were answered. If not, they must supplement their previous substantiations by responding to those questions. The supplements are due by November 1, 2020.

Even a submitter that had substantiated the CBI claim within the past five years by including those two questions must supplement its submission by identifying the previous submission to EPA. 40 C.F.R. § 710.43(b)(2)(ii). This supplemental submission is also due by November 1, 2020. 40 C.F.R. § 710.47(b).

What Happens If the Two Questions Are Not Answered by November 1?

Under the CBI Review Rule, for any of the three substantiation options, "EPA will deny the confidentiality claim in accordance with the procedures set forth in TSCA section 14(g)(2) and 40 CFR part 2, subpart B" unless a substantiation meeting all the requirements is submitted. 40 C.F.R. § 710.49.

What Happens After November 1, 2020?

Until EPA completes its review of a CBI claim for a chemical substance identity on the confidential portion of the Inventory, that identity will remain confidential. The preamble to the Inventory Reset rule explained,

A chemical substance for which EPA has received a request to maintain an existing CBI claim for specific chemical identity will remain on the confidential portion of the Inventory pending EPA's review of the claim pursuant to a review plan to be promulgated at a later date in accordance with TSCA section 8(b)(4)(C)-(D).

Under TSCA § 8(b)(4)(E)(i), EPA must complete its review of all the CBI claims for chemical identities submitted in connection with Inventory Reset within five years of compiling the initial list of active substances. According to its website, EPA published the Inventory identifying active substances reported by both manufacturers and processors on February 19, 2019, so it must complete the reviews by February 19, 2024.

Under the CBI Review Rule, approved CBI claims will generally last for ten years:

[With certain exceptions,] a specific chemical identity that is the subject of an approved confidentiality claim under this subpart will be protected from disclosure for a period of 10 years from the date on which the confidentiality claim was first asserted by any submitter after June 22, 2016, unless, prior to the expiration of the period, the claimant notifies EPA that the person is withdrawing the confidentiality claim, in which case EPA will not protect the information from disclosure; or EPA otherwise becomes aware that the information does not qualify for protection from disclosure, in which case EPA will take the actions described in TSCA section 14(g)(2) to notify the claimant of EPA's intent to disclose the information.

40 C.F.R. § 710.55(b). Submitters will have the opportunity to renew their CBI claims prior to the expiration of the ten-year period. TSCA § 14(e)(1)(B)(2).

For unapproved CBI claims, EPA may make the chemical identity public. Under TSCA § 8(b)(4)(B)(iv), EPA must move any active chemical substance for which no request was received to maintain an existing claim for protection against disclosure of the specific chemical identity of the chemical substance as confidential from the confidential portion of the Inventory to the public portion of the Inventory. EPA presumably will interpret this to mean that no CBI claim for which all the substantiation questions were satisfactorily answered was received.

What is less clear is what happens if two companies submit CBI claims for the same confidential chemical identity but one of the claims is denied. In that case, it would not be the case that "no" request to maintain confidentiality was received. On the other hand, under CDR confidentiality rules, if a single company fails to claim and substantiate a chemical identity on the confidential portion of the Inventory, EPA will make that chemical identity public "without further notice to the submitter." 40 C.F.R. § 711.30(e).

Conclusion

In summary, it's time to go back to 2018 and check on what was – and was not – submitted by way of substantiating CBI claims for confidential chemical identities during Inventory Reset, and then taking appropriate action if necessary. This needs to be completed by November 1. After taking care of this issue, companies may have just enough time to meet the November 30 CDR submission deadline.

ExxonMobil's Supposed Shift on Climate Belies Its Donations to Climate Deniers
https://truthout.org/articles/exxonmobils-shift-on-climate-change-belies-its-contributions-to-climate-deniers/
By Elliott Negin,
Truthout
PUBLISHED
October 19, 2020

After decades of public denial, ExxonMobil now acknowledges that "the risk of climate change is real" and says it is "committed to being part of the solution," at least according to the company's website and statements. To that end, the largest investor-owned oil company in the world claims it supports a federal carbon tax and the Paris climate agreement.

But the company's recently released grantmaking report shows that it has not ended its two-decade-long campaign to stymie government efforts to address climate change. By ExxonMobil's own accounting, it gave $690,000 to eight climate science denier groups in 2019, a 10 percent drop from 2018. In addition, it continued to fund federal lawmakers who oppose a carbon tax, despite its supposed longtime support for the idea. Forty percent of the nearly $1 million it has contributed so far to congressional incumbent campaigns during the 2019-20 election cycle has gone to 115 of the 150 climate science deniers still in office.

Sixty percent of ExxonMobil's 2019 donations to climate obstructionist groups for "public information and policy research" went to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, while another 30 percent was split between the American Enterprise Institute and the Manhattan Institute, which have been receiving annual grants from the company since it began financing climate disinformation 22 years ago. All told, ExxonMobil has spent more than $37 million on climate science denier organizations from 1998 through 2019, more than any individual funder besides Charles Koch and his brother, the late David Koch, the billionaire owners of the coal, oil and gas conglomerate Koch Industries. Koch-controlled foundations spent more than $145 million on many of the same groups over roughly the same time period.

Did the top three recipients of ExxonMobil grants for climate science denier groups in 2019 toe the company's publicly stated line on climate? The short answer is no. If actions speak louder than words, the donations call into question ExxonMobil's commitment to seriously address the climate crisis and deserve a closer look.

The U.S. Chamber Still Opposes Carbon Pollution Standards

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has been a major player in blocking action on climate change going back to the 1990s, when the business lobby and Exxon were members of the Global Climate Coalition, a consortium of corporations and trade associations opposed to government policies that would cut carbon emissions.

But in 2009 — the same year ExxonMobil first announced its support for a carbon tax in a cynical attempt to derail cap-and-trade climate legislation — the Chamber's united front began to crack. A handful of Fortune 500 companies — including Apple, Exelon Corporation and Pacific Gas & Electric — quit the Chamber over its opposition to the cap-and-trade bill while two other high-profile companies — Nike and Johnson & Johnson —

retained their membership but rebuked the business lobby for the same reason. Since then, at least a dozen Chamber members, including Hewlett-Packard, General Mills, Mars, Nestlé and Unilever, have headed for the exits.

By contrast, ExxonMobil not only retained its Chamber membership, but it also pledged $5 million in annual installments to help pay for the Chamber's $250-million renovation of its Washington, D.C., headquarters. In 2019, the company donated $400,000 for the building rehabilitation and another $15,000 to the Chamber's Corporate Citizenship Center, bringing its total contributions since 2014 to $4.8 million.

What does ExxonMobil get for its money? Among other things, the business lobby goes to bat for it in court by filing lawsuits against the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and in the court of public opinion by funding misleading climate-related reports. A prime example is the Chamber's widely debunked 2017 report that grossly exaggerated the cost to the U.S. economy of complying with the Paris climate agreement. President Donald Trump cited that report as his primary rationale for ignoring the U.S. commitment to the accord, and he has vowed to officially pull the United States out in early November.

However, in 2019, the Chamber seemed to take a 180-degree turn, declaring on its website: "Our climate is changing and humans are contributing to these changes. Inaction is simply not an option." Although one could quibble with the assertion that human activity is merely contributing to climate change when in fact burning fossil fuels is the main cause, it was a far cry from when the organization maintained in comments submitted to the EPA in 2009 that "a warming of even 3 [degrees Celsius] in the next 100 years would, on balance, be beneficial to humans."

But the Chamber's turnabout was not complete. Although it now concedes the reality of human-caused climate change, it is still pushing private-sector innovation as the solution to the climate crisis rather than much-needed government regulation, which historically has driven technological advances.

So, while the Chamber supports government funding for research and development of advanced nuclear reactors, utility-scale batteries, and carbon capture and storage technology, it backed the Trump administration's rollbacks of the Obama administration's 2015 Clean Power Plan, which would have reduced power plant carbon emissions and its 2015 "Waters of the United States" rule, which would have protected small streams, wetlands and groundwater from toxic chemicals.

More recently, the Chamber supported the Trump administration's weakening of the 50-year-old National Environmental Policy Act by limiting public input in the infrastructure project approval process and rescinding a requirement that federal agencies consider a proposed project's impact on the climate.

Unlike ExxonMobil's professed support for a carbon tax, the Chamber has no official position, but if carbon tax legislation ever made it to the Senate or House floor, it presumably would oppose it given its dim view of government regulation.

Likewise, the Chamber's avowed support for U.S. compliance with the Paris climate accord includes a major caveat. Dan Byers, vice president for policy at the Chamber's Global Energy Institute, told Politico in August 2019 that it is "absolutely important for the U.S. to remain in the Paris climate agreement" but added that the "Obama administration's pledge was unrealistic, [and] was going to have a negative impact on our economy. And so we'd like to see that revisited." In other words, the Chamber would like the United States to remain a party to the agreement so that it could lobby to weaken the U.S. commitment to it.

American Enterprise Institute Still Downplays the Climate Threat

In 2019, ExxonMobil gave the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) $110,000, bringing its total since 1998 to $4.76 million — more than any other of its climate science denier grantees. The 82-year-old, free market think tank also receives generous funding from other climate disinformation network supporters, including the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation and the Charles Koch Foundation.

What does ExxonMobil get for its money from AEI? A cheerleader for fossil fuels, economist Benjamin Zycher, who — contrary to the company's professed climate positions — argues that a carbon tax would be "ineffective" and has called the Paris agreement an "absurdity."

In March, Zycher published a report arguing that "any plausible policy" to curb carbon emissions "would yield trivial effects while imposing large costs." Instead, he recommended the federal government adopt a policy of "watchful waiting, adaptation over time, and ongoing investment in resilience against the future effects of climactic [sic] changes."

ExxonMobil has spent more than $37 million on climate science denier organizations from 1998 through 2019.

How could Zycher recommend "watchful waiting" given the large costs climate change is already imposing right now? Granted, he published his report before this summer, when heat waves and wildfires burned up the West Coast and hurricanes slammed the Southeast. But last summer was not that different, and climate change-related disasters have been racking up considerable damage over the last few years. From 2017 through 2019, there were 44 unique extreme weather and climate-linked events across the country causing damages of $1 billion or more, collectively costing more than $460 billion.

Nevertheless, Zycher insists fossil fuels are indispensable. "Opposition to fossil fuels implies a reduction in policies — education, training, health care, and the like — that add to human capital and so increase incomes and the demand for conventional energy," he wrote. "Therefore, opposition to fossil fuels is fundamentally antihuman."

Zycher made the same argument in a May 7 column in the Financial Times, ranting that environmentalists who aim to deprive the world of fossil fuels "hate humanity, and the planet too."

Putting aside Zycher's ad hominem attack on the "environmental left," he deliberately confuses the societal benefits of energy with how it is generated. At several junctures in history, humans switched from wood to coal to natural gas to warm their homes. Likewise, they switched from whale oil to kerosene to incandescents to LEDs to illuminate their homes.

Opposition to coal and kerosene in the past or fossil fuels today is not "fundamentally antihuman" when there are better, cleaner alternatives. And it turns out the alternatives — solar and wind, specifically — are now the cheapest sources of electricity, and they could have been more widely available years ago if ExxonMobil and other fossil fuel companies had not stood in the way.

The Manhattan Institute Is Still in Love With Fossil Fuels
The Manhattan Institute, a New York City-based libertarian think tank, received $90,000 from ExxonMobil in 2019. Since 1998, the company has given the organization more than $1.4 million.

For the last decade, the institute's go-to energy expert has been Robert Bryce, who, like AEI's Zycher, is no fan of a carbon tax, ExxonMobil's supposed pet climate solution. Before he left the think tank at the end of 2019, Bryce spent much of his time bashing renewable energy and extolling fossil fuels in reports and in the pages of the National Review, New York Post, Wall Street Journal and other publications.

Bryce routinely disparages renewables without providing context. In an August 2019 column on the conservative website RealClearEnergy, for example, he maintained that the wind industry is "facing increasing opposition" at least partly because of what he insists is the major threat it poses to eagles and other birds, an assertion he has been making ad nauseum for years. In fact, the top human-caused threats to birds are climate change, buildings, power lines, misapplied pesticides, communications towers, and oil and gas industry fluid waste pits — not wind turbines.

As for wind energy's specific threat to eagles, Dan Ashe, a former director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, debunked Bryce's fallacious claim in a December 2016 HuffPost column. "Public attention on eagle loss in recent years has focused almost exclusively on wind energy," Ashe wrote. "In truth, wind turbine collisions comprise a fraction of human-caused eagle losses. Most result from intentional and accidental poisoning and purposeful shooting. The majority of non-intentional loss occurs when eagles collide with cars or ingest lead shot or bullet fragments in remains and gut piles left by hunters. Others collide with or are electrocuted on power lines. Disproportionately and solely focusing on wind energy distorts public perceptions at a time when we desperately need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions."

Cutting carbon pollution is hardly a goal that Bryce or any of his Manhattan Institute colleagues would ever publicly endorse. Doing so would certainly not please their other climate science denier benefactors, which include the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, Charles Koch Foundation, hedge fund billionaire Robert Mercer's Mercer Family Foundation, and Mercer's daughter, Rebekah, a Manhattan Institute trustee. All have donated considerably more money to the think tank than ExxonMobil in recent years and, unlike the oil company, do not pretend to care about the climate crisis.

Maintaining the Status Quo in Congress

The New York Times recently ran a story pointing out that European and U.S. oil companies are heading in very different directions when it comes to climate change. While BP, Royal Dutch Shell, and other European-based companies are beginning to sell their oil fields and invest in renewable energy, their U.S. counterparts Chevron and ExxonMobil are betting that oil and gas will continue to make up at least 50 percent of the energy market for at least the next 20 years.

Instead of transitioning to solar and wind, the two U.S. oil giants are spending relatively trivial amounts on unproven technologies, such as modular fusion nuclear reactors (Chevron), algae-based biofuel (ExxonMobil), and carbon capture and storage schemes (both), which so far have been costly failures. If those pipe dreams were ever demonstrated to work at the necessary scale, it would still take decades to commercialize them.

The main reason European oil and gas companies are taking baby steps to embrace renewables? Government pressure. The European Union has set a goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, and seven EU countries plan to phase out vehicles powered by gasoline and diesel over the next few decades. Austria, with the most aggressive timetable, will ban internal-combustion-engine vehicle sales after 2020.

Although California recently announced it would ban the sale of new gasoline-powered cars by 2035 and most diesel-powered trucks by 2045, the Trump administration has taken the opposite tack, gutting landmark Obama-era rules curbing vehicle and power plant carbon emissions, rolling back methane emission and coal ash storage regulations, and lifting bans on oil and gas drilling on public land. Congress, meanwhile, has declined to consider climate bills that have been introduced since the beginning of the 2019-20 session.

A September 21 New York Times story cited unnamed energy analysts who excused Chevron and ExxonMobil for not changing their business models. "U.S. lawmakers," the analysts told the Times, "have simply not given them enough incentives to make a radical break."

A major reason Congress has not given the U.S. oil industry enough incentives to change course is because oil and gas companies have been giving a critical mass of U.S. lawmakers enough incentives to do nothing. As mentioned above, $401,198 of the $991,329 ExxonMobil has spent so far on congressional incumbent campaigns during the current election cycle has gone to 115 of the 150 climate science deniers on Capitol Hill. Likewise, Chevron has spent $936,489 on incumbent campaigns so far. A little more than $433,000 — 46 percent — has gone to 82 climate science deniers.

Besides making campaign contributions, oil companies spend a lot of money to keep tabs on their friends in Washington. So far, the top three oil and gas lobbyists during the 2019-20 cycle are Koch Industries, which has spent $30.72 million; Chevron, which has spent $28.54 million; and ExxonMobil, which has spent $28.36 million.

Why does ExxonMobil still support so many climate science deniers in Congress while contending to be so keen on a carbon tax? After all, just two years ago the company announced it would donate $1 million over two years to Americans for Carbon Dividends, a political action group created to promote a revenue-neutral carbon tax.

Some lawmakers are bullish on a carbon tax, but ExxonMobil largely ignores them. Since January 2019, eight representatives, two Republicans and six Democrats — and nine senators, all Democrats — have introduced 10 carbon tax bills and one cap-and-trade bill. But only one of the eight representatives and four of the nine senators received a campaign contribution from ExxonMobil during this election cycle. The total amount the company donated to the five lawmakers was $15,000 — a measly 4 percent of what it gave climate science deniers.

To be sure, ExxonMobil's spending on climate disinformation has shrunk dramatically in recent years. The company's 2019 outlay was less than half of what it spent in 2017 and the lowest amount since 1999, when Exxon was going through its merger with Mobil. Likewise, its campaign contributions to climate science deniers in Congress dropped from $1.1 million during the 2017-18 election cycle to only $400,000, this cycle.

But the fact remains that, while the company is saying all the right things publicly about the need to address climate change, it is continuing to fund think tanks and lawmakers who dispute the science and oppose government action. That suggests that its professed support for a carbon tax is no more than a disingenuous public relations ploy to delay government action.

The tobacco industry used the very same tactic to hold off regulations for decades, and it worked well until it didn't, when the industry lost in court and agreed to pay $246 billion in fines to states over 25 years.

Author's note: Besides the U.S. Chamber of Commerce ($415,000), American Enterprise Institute ($110,000) and Manhattan Institute ($90,000), ExxonMobil gave grants in 2019 to five other climate science denier groups: Center for American and International Law ($5,000), Federalist Society ($10,000), Hoover Institution ($15,000), Mountain States Legal Foundation ($5,000) and the Washington Legal Foundation ($40,000).
This article was produced by Earth | Food | Life, a project of the Independent Media Institute.

Elizabeth Warren on the Stump: Trump Threatens Existence of All Life on the Planet
https://www.breitbart.com/2020-election/2020/10/19/elizabeth-warren-stump-trump-threatens-the-existence-all-life-planet/
By Penny Starr
19 Oct 2020

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), speaking as a Biden-Harris surrogate on the campaign trail on Monday, said that President Donald Trump is a threat to life on the planet because of his stance on climate change.

"Donald Trump threatens the existence of human life, of all life on this planet," Warren said in a video posted on the Hill YouTube channel. "And on November 3, we will hold Donald Trump accountable."

Warren's remarks centered on the existential threat of climate change.

"We are reaching a moment on our planet in which the crisis that is upon us may no longer be one that we will be able to successfully fight back against," Warren said.

"The science around this is not controversial," Warren said. "The science is clear."

"In fact, you know what scares me to death?" Warren asked. "Every time we get more data and reanalyze the data, what we discover is the problem's even worse than we thought."

"We have even less time than we thought," Warren said.

"What has Donald Trump done for four years?" Warren asked. "He not only hasn't made things better; he has actively made them worse."
"He withdrew us from the Paris climate accord. He's put a coal lobbyist in charge of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). What could possibly go wrong?" Warren said.

In fact, EPA administrator Andrew Wheeler's time at the EPA started when he served as a special assistant in the agency's EPA'S Pollution Prevention and Toxics office during the George H. W. Bush administration. Before that, he was a principal and team leader of the Energy and Environment Practice Group at FaegreBD Consulting, among other posts.

"[Trump] has opened up for offshore drilling, and he has said yes to the oil companies. They can drill in the Arctic National Wildlife preserve," Warren said.

Trump has actually placed a moratorium on offshore drilling in Florida. As Breitbart News reported, the drilling permits in the Arctic will take place in only 0.01 percent of the 19 million acres of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

GSC Energy Challenge Launches
https://progressivegrocer.com/gsc-energy-challenge-launches
By Bridget Goldschmidt - 10/19/2020

The Grocery Stewardship Certification (GSC) program and New England's grocery retailer associations have joined forces to launch the GSC Energy Challenge. Involving employees in sustainable operating practices, the event offers tools for retailers to lower costs and shrink their environmental footprint. The free initiative is funded through a US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant to work directly with communities to reduce environmental risks to protect and improve human health and the quality of life.

Participating retailers include Big Y, Associated Grocers of New England, and Hannaford Supermarkets. Stores taking part in the GSC Energy Challenge receive support and training to set, measure and achieve energy-efficiency goals.

"By joining this grocery store energy challenge, food retailers will empower their store associates to identify energy-efficiency opportunities and calculate cost savings," said U.S. EPA New England Regional Administrator Dennis Deziel. "These efforts can benefit our environment, as well as providing cost savings to companies and consumers. This is the type of innovative outcome that EPA New England's Healthy Communities grant program is very happy to support."

"We are excited that a number of our members are participating in this challenge and are learning ways to help their stores be more energy efficient," said Chris Flynn, president of the Boston-based Massachusetts Food Association. "The retail industry in Massachusetts is committed to operating more sustainably for the benefit of all the communities that we operate in."

"Grocery retailers [of] all sizes have an opportunity to make positive impacts on the planet by reducing energy use and ultimately greenhouse-gas emissions," noted Catrina Damrell, GSC program manager. "The Mass Food Association, the Rhode Island Food Dealers Association and the Connecticut Food Association have been instrumental [in] launching this challenge. Despite the pandemic, the grocery sector continues to prioritize sustainability. I am looking forward to working with the stores joining the challenge to help them manage their energy usage more effectively in a way that ensures a profitable bottom line."

More than 1,000 grocery stores across the country are enrolled in Plymouth, Massachusetts-based Manomet's GSC program. GSC helps corporate and store-level staff analyze store-level practices and equipment and identify no- and low-cost strategies to lift revenue, increase energy efficiency, reduce waste and lower costs. The program is the only one to focus on the operations inside the building, providing grocers with strategies for both no-cost operational management practices and capital investments.

Scarborough, Maine-based Hannaford operates 184 stores in five Northeast states, employing more than 26,000 associates. Parent company Ahold Delhaize USA, a division of Zaandam, Netherlands-based Ahold Delhaize, is No. 11 on The PG 100, Progressive Grocer's 2020 list of the top food and consumables retailers in North America. One of the largest independently owned supermarket chains in New England, Springfield, Mass.-based Big Y operates 83 locations throughout Massachusetts and Connecticut and is No. 72 on PG's list.

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11 U.S. states urge EPA to toughen planned airplane emissions rules
https://www.reuters.com/article/usa-airlines-emissions/11-u-s-states-urge-epa-to-toughen-planned-airplane-emissions-rules-idUSL1N2HA1T8
By Reuters Staff
OCTOBER 19, 20204:07 PM

WASHINGTON, Oct 19 (Reuters) - A group of 11 states and the District of Columbia urged the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to strengthen the first-ever proposed standards regulating greenhouse gas emissions from airplanes and other aircraft.

The state attorneys general led by California said the EPA emissions rules proposed in July were "entirely insufficient."

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra said the "sham proposal to regulate it is the equivalent of doing nothing."

The EPA said in July the proposed requirements would apply to new-type designs as of January 2020 and to in-production airplanes or those with amended type certificates starting in 2028. (Reporting by David Shepardson Editing by Chris Reese)

Three trucking companies fined for violating CARB's Truck and Bus Regulation

https://landline.media/three-trucking-companies-fined-for-violating-carbs-truck-and-bus-regulation/
OCTOBER 19, 2020
Tyson Fisher

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has settled with three trucking companies for violating the California Air Resources Board's Truck and Bus Regulation.

On Oct. 16, the EPA announced the three settlements totaling $417,000 in penalties for trucking companies that violated CARBS's Truck and Bus Regulation, Drayage Truck Regulations and Transport Refrigeration Unit Regulation.

Roadrunner Transportation Systems must pay a $117,000 civil penalty and use compliant trucks moving forward. The trucking company did not have diesel particulate filters per the Truck and Bus Regulation. Also, Roadrunner operated unregistered and noncompliant drayage trucks. Furthermore, the company hired carriers to transport goods in California without verifying that the vehicles were in compliance, and dispatched drayage trucks without required record-keeping.

The Boise Cascade Co. will pay a $175,000 civil penalty. That company failed to verify that hired carriers complied with the Truck and Bus Regulation.

Ruan Transportation Management Systems must pay a $125,000 penalty. Ruan used trucks that did not have the required diesel particulate filters. Also, the company did not verify compliance with the Truck and Bus Regulation for hired carriers. According to a news release, Ruan is the first company cited by EPA for failing to timely meet specified particulate matter emission reductions in transport refrigeration equipment under California requirements.

"As trucks are one of the largest sources of air pollution in California, EPA will continue to ensure these heavy-duty vehicles have the needed pollution-control equipment and operate in compliance with the rules," EPA Pacific Southwest Regional Administrator John Busterud said in a statement. "These companies have agreed to bring their trucks into compliance and operate more cleanly in all communities they serve."

The latest Truck and Bus Regulation settlements are larger compared to previous settlements.

Earlier this year, CARB announced a batch of settlements for eight companies. Those settlements totaled more than $130,000, with the largest settlement reaching nearly $41,000.
The Truck and Bus Regulation requires heavy-duty diesel vehicles that operate in California to reduce toxic air contaminant emissions from their exhaust. By 2023, nearly all trucks and buses must have 2010 or newer model year engines to reduce particulate matter and oxides of nitrogen emissions. LL

Brindisi, Schumer Announce EPA Grant to Help With CharlesTown Mall Cleanup
https://wibx950.com/brindisi-schumer-announce-epa-grant-to-help-with-charlestown-mall-cleanup/
By JEFF MONASKI
Published: October 19, 2020

The crumbled walls and hazardous materials at the old CharlesTown Mall complex will remain for some time, but some federal money has been allocated to the site to help with cleanup efforts.

Congressman Anthony Brindisi announced $800,000 in Environmental Protection Agency grant money on Tuesday that will help get the ball rolling, following a massive fire at the complex in late August. In announcing the grant, Brindisi said the money could be used for safety and structural concerns, including some cleanup, a perimeter fence to keep squatters and others off the site, and an evaluation of remaining hazardous materials at the location.

Asbestos is among those toxins that have already been identified among the ruins, Brindisi said.

Ruins from CharlesTown Mall in Utica. Photo taken on Oct 19, 2020 (Jeff Monaski, WIBX 950)

The 22nd District Democrat called it a good step forward in the overall process and said the large burden shouldn't fall solely on taxpayers in the city of Utica and town of Frankfort, both of which are home to the sprawling complex straddling the Utica-Frankfort municipal line. He also thanked US Senator Charles Schumer for his efforts in helping to secure the money.

“After the fire, Senator Schumer and I took immediate steps to bring EPA and State DEC to the site and we demanded action to ensure safety for concerned families. With this announcement, we will be able to begin cleanup and move forward. Working together with federal, state, and local officials, we can turn the page on the CharlesTown mall and make a safer area for all," Brindisi said.

When asked about the facility's current owner and their responsibility in the cleanup process, Frankfort Town Supervisor Glenn Asnoe said CharlesTown Mall LLC had 'basically walked away from the property' and, has or would be seeking bankruptcy protection.

Securing the site with a perimeter fence in an important first step to avoid future fires or injuries there, Asnoe said.

WHAT CHARLESTOWN MALL LOOKED LIKE PRIOR TO MASSIVE FIRE

Work in the project could begin within the next few weeks, Brindisi said.

A price tag for the entire cost to remove debris and hazardous materials that remain at the more than 100-year-old facility is not known, officials said.

Read More: EPA Grant to Help With CharlesTown Mall Cleanup: Brindisi | https://wibx950.com/brindisi-schumer-announce-epa-grant-to-help-with-charlestown-mall-cleanup/?utm_source=tsmclip&utm_medium=referral

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EPA, SCAQMD Award to Help Deploy 70 All-Electric Volvo Trucks
https://www.truckinginfo.com/10128329/epa-scaqmd-award-to-help-deploy-70-all-electric-volvo-trucks
October 19, 2020 • by HDT Staff

Volvo Trucks North America was recently awarded $20 million in grants to deploy 70 VNR Electric trucks as part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Targeted Air Shed Grant Program, as well as $1.7 million in charging infrastructure funding from the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD).

The trucks will be delivered to a handful of Southern California fleet operators in 2021, with the program ending in the third quarter of 2022. As part of the Volvo LIGHTS (Low Impact Green Heavy Transport Solutions) project, a collaboration with SCAQMD and 13 other organizations to introduce battery-electric trucks and equipment into the market at scale, Volvo Trucks is committed to delivering close to 100 VNR Electric trucks to the area.

"This grant provides Volvo Trucks with an excellent opportunity to further expedite the success of the ecosystem designed through the Volvo LIGHTS project to support the wide-scale deployment of battery-electric heavy-duty trucks," said Peter Voorhoeve, president of Volvo Trucks North America.

EPA Targeted Air Shed Grant Program focuses on regions with the highest ozone and particulate matter pollution.

"The EPA Targeted Air Shed Grant has enabled South Coast AQMD to continue partnering with Volvo Trucks for the swift deployment of nearly 100 heavy-duty zero-emission trucks," said Wayne Nastri, executive officer for South Coast AQMD. "Innovative collaborations like this are key to bringing clean air to Southern California."

The 70 trucks deployed through the grant are estimated to reduce more than 152.63 tons of NOx, 1.317 tons of PM2.5, and 53,160 tons of CO2 over their lifetime.
As part of the project, South Coast AQMD evaluate all the emission reduction opportunities presented by battery-electric trucks. Volvo Trucks will also gather deployment data to further refine total cost of ownership calculations including actual vehicle maintenance and fuel cost savings.

"Volvo Trucks supports our pioneering fleet customers in paving the way to a real-world, sustainable transport future," said Voorhoeve.

Toyota Agrees to Develop Class 8 Fuel Cell Electric Truck
https://thenewswheel.com/toyota-agrees-develop-class-8-fuel-cell-electric-truck/
By Kurt Verlin
19 Oct 2020

Toyota and Hino Trucks have agreed to jointly develop a Class 8 fuel cell electric truck for the North American market. With a minimum GVWR of 33,001 pounds, these are the biggest type of semi-trucks you'll find on the roads.

Toyota and Hino's energy-focused partnership stretches back nearly 20 years, having jointly demonstrated a fuel cell bus back in 2003. Earlier this year, they announced their intent to build a zero-emissions, hydrogen-powered, heavy-duty fuel cell truck, though at the time the focus was on the Japanese market.

Out of that partnership came the Hino XL Series chassis, powered by Toyota's fuel cell technology. Now the companies say they will leverage it to deliver Class 8 truck capability in North America without harmful emissions. The first demonstration vehicle is expected to arrive in the first half of 2021.

"It will be quiet, smooth and powerful while emitting nothing but water," said Tak Yokoo, senior executive engineer for Toyota Research and Development. "Toyota's twenty plus years of fuel cell technology combined with Hino's heavy-duty truck experience will create an innovative and capable product."

According to the EPA, transportation was responsible for 28 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions in the United States in 2018 — more than any other sector. Within that sector, medium- and heavy-duty trucks accounted for nearly a quarter of emissions.

Toyota intends to demonstrate that hydrogen-powered fuel cell trucks, with their zero emissions, extended range, and fast charging times, are a commercially viable alternative to traditional trucks. But for now, they'll have to be restricted to operating in the California area, as the hydrogen refueling infrastructure across the rest of North America is lacking.

Nonetheless, fuel cell trucks may be the key to meeting the EPA's upcoming Cleaner Trucks Initiative, which plans to update NOx emissions standards for heavy-duty trucks. NOx, or nitrogen oxide, is poisonous and linked to significant health impacts. Heavy-duty trucks are the biggest contributors to NOx emissions, in large part because of their reliance on diesel.

California's South Coast Air Basin will require a NOx reduction of 70 percent from 2019 levels by 2023, and is working hard to push nationwide rules because 60 percent of truck travel in the state is from trucks registered in other states. Even if it fails in that endeavor, and California remains alone with stricter regulations, manufacturers will still need to build more efficient trucks. Toyota and Hino's Class 8 fuel cell electric truck seems like a good solution.

VTNA Awarded $21.7 Million in Grants to Deploy Electric Trucks
https://www.ttnews.com/articles/vtna-awarded-217-million-grants-deploy-electric-trucks
October 19, 2020 11:45 AM, EDT

Volvo Trucks North America announced it was awarded $21.7 million in federal and state grants to deploy 70 VNR Electric trucks in Southern California for regional freight distribution and drayage.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is distributing the largest portion of the grants.

VTNA, a unit of Volvo Group, will deliver the EPA-funded VNR Electric trucks to Southern California fleet operators starting in 2021 through the third quarter of 2022, allowing for at least a full year of operations by the end of the project period in 2023. The announcement comes as VTNA nears the official commercial launch of its VNR Electric truck model later this year.

The EPA's Targeted Air Shed Grant Program is providing $20 million in funding, supplemented by $1.7 million from the South Coast Air Quality Management District for charging infrastructure, to improve air quality in the region.

"We applaud the EPA and South Coast AQMD for addressing the key issues in advancing electromobility and incentivizing technology investments in the region, and are proud they continue to trust in Volvo Trucks North America to lead the acceleration of Class 8 zero-emission vehicles," VTNA President Peter Voorhoeve said in a release.

Greensboro, N.C.-based VTNA will gather deployment data to further refine total cost of ownership calculations including actual vehicle maintenance and fuel cost savings, which can be even lower when combined with low carbon fuel standard credits and managed charging to reduce demand charges. Learnings from this project will allow VTNA to fine-tune the production at its New River Valley plant in Virginia, enabling seamless integration of the VNR Electric truck model into its manufacturing process for optimized, quality production. — Transport Topics

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Volvo : Trucks Gets EPA Award to Deploy Zero-Emission Trucks

https://www.marketscreener.com/quote/stock/AB-VOLVO-6492152/news/Volvo-Trucks-Gets-EPA-Award-to-Deploy-Zero-Emission-Trucks-31567707/
10/19/2020 | 11:54am EDTBy Stephen Nakrosis

Volvo Trucks North America said it received a $21.7 million grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other parties to deploy electric trucks in Southern California.

The company said the grant from the EPA and the South Coast Air Quality Management District will see Volvo deliver VNR Electric trucks to fleet operators in Southern California, beginning in the third quarter of next year. Volvo Trucks said it will have an official commercial launch of its VNR Electric truck model later this year.

Combined with 25 other deployments through its Low Impact Green Heavy Transport Solutions, or Lights, program, Volvo Trucks has committed to deliver almost 100 VNR Electric trucks to the region, the company said.

The company also said deployment data will allow it to refine calculations on the total cost of ownership and "will allow Volvo Trucks to fine-tune the production at its New River Valley plant in Virginia, enabling seamless integration of the of the VNR Electric truck model into its manufacturing process for optimized, quality production."

Peter Voorhoeve, president of Volvo Trucks North America, said, "This grant provides Volvo Trucks with an excellent opportunity to further expedite the success of the ecosystem designed through the Volvo Lights project to support the wide-scale deployment of battery-electric heavy-duty trucks."

--Write to Stephen Nakrosis at stephen.nakrosis@wsj.com
(END) Dow Jones Newswires

Volvo Trucks awarded $21.7M to deploy Class 8 zero-emission trucks
https://www.truckpartsandservice.com/commercial-truck-dealer-news/volvo-trucks-awarded-21-7m-to-deploy-class-8-zero-emission-trucks/
By TRUCKS, PARTS, SERVICE ™ Staff
October 19, 2020

Volvo Trucks North America was awarded $21.7 million in grants to deploy 70 VNR Electric trucks in Southern California for regional freight distribution and drayage.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Targeted Air Shed Grant Program is providing $20 million in funding, supplemented by $1.7 million from the South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) for charging infrastructure, to improve air quality in the region.

Volvo Trucks will deliver the EPA-funded VNR Electric trucks to Southern California fleet operators starting in 2021 through the third quarter of 2022, allowing for at least a full year of operations by the end of the project period in 2023. The announcement comes as Volvo Trucks nears the official commercial launch of its VNR Electric truck model later this year.

Volvo Trucks will leverage best practices learned from the Volvo LIGHTS (Low Impact Green Heavy Transport Solutions) project, its collaboration with South Coast AQMD and 13 other organizations to develop an end-to-end blueprint to successfully introduce battery-electric trucks and equipment into the market at scale. Combined with the other 25 truck deployments through the Volvo LIGHTS project, Volvo Trucks is committed to delivering nearly 100 VNR Electric trucks to the region for zero-emission freight transport, Volvo says.

"This grant provides Volvo Trucks with an excellent opportunity to further expedite the success of the ecosystem designed through the Volvo LIGHTS project to support the wide-scale deployment of battery-electric heavy-duty trucks," says Peter Voorhoeve, president of Volvo Trucks North America.

"We applaud the EPA and South Coast AQMD for addressing the key issues in advancing electromobility and incentivizing technology investments in the region and are proud they continue to trust in Volvo Trucks North America to lead the acceleration of Class 8 zero-emission vehicles," Voorhoeve says.

The EPA Targeted Air Shed Grant Program focuses on the regions that have the highest ozone and particulate matter (PM) pollution, including California's South Coast Air Basin. South Coast AQMD is the agency responsible for attaining state and federal air quality standards for this region — including the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside and the Coachella Valley.

"The EPA Targeted Air Shed Grant has enabled South Coast AQMD to continue partnering with Volvo Trucks for the swift deployment of nearly 100 heavy-duty zero-emission trucks," says Wayne Nastri, executive officer for South Coast AQMD. "Innovative collaborations like this are key to bringing clean air to Southern California. South Coast AQMD is pleased to fund the charging infrastructure to support these new heavy-duty trucks that will operate in disadvantaged communities facing the brunt of air pollution."

The 70 Volvo VNR Electric trucks deployed through this grant are anticipated to provide lifetime emission reduction benefits in excess of 152.63 tons of NOx, 1.317 tons of PM2.5 and 53,160 tons of CO2. As part of the project, South Coast AQMD will lead a data analysis effort to evaluate the full breadth of emission reduction opportunities presented by battery-electric trucks, the company says.

Volvo Trucks will also gather deployment data to further refine total cost of ownership calculations including actual vehicle maintenance and fuel cost savings—which can be even lower when combined with low carbon fuel standard credits and managed charging to reduce demand charges. Learnings from this project will allow Volvo Trucks to fine-tune the production at its New River Valley plant in Virginia, enabling seamless integration of the of the VNR Electric truck model into its manufacturing process for optimized, quality production.

"Volvo Trucks supports our pioneering fleet customers in paving the way to a real-world, sustainable transport future. The large volume of early Volvo VNR Electric deployments in Southern California will help us kick-start this year's successful commercial launch in North America," says Voorhoeve.

Trump Administration Touts Superfund List Deletions as Victories Amid Continuing Contamination Threat
https://www.indianaenvironmentalreporter.org/posts/trump-administration-touts-superfund-list-deletions-as-victories-amid-continuing-contamination-threat
Enrique Saenz
October 19, 2020

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is touting the full and partial removal of 27 Superfund sites from a list tracking the nation's most contaminated sites as Trump administration victories despite decades of cleanup, persisting contamination threats and concerns expressed by local authorities.

The EPA fully deleted 14 Superfund sites and partially deleted 13 sites, including three in Indiana, from the National Priorities List.

The Douglas Road/Uniroyal, Inc. Landfill in Mishawaka, the Fort Wayne Reduction Dump and the USS Lead Superfund site in East Chicago were partially deleted from the NPL, but some environmental threats remain at those sites.
The deletions mean specific conditions for cleanup set at the time the sites were added to the NPL have been fully or partially met.

Partial deletions allow developers or investors to make money off the delisted portions of a site even as cleanup of toxic substances continues at other parts of a site.

"Cleaning up these Superfund sites brings real environmental benefits to places that have suffered environmental degradation while also helping move them forward," said EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler. "Once the land has been cleaned up of historical pollutants, the sites can be repurposed and reused in ways that create jobs and enhance the health of entire communities. We're proud of the progress we've made, and there is still more work to do."

The Trump administration has prioritized deleting Superfund sites from the NPL, pursuing a historic rate of deletions while claiming them as environmental victories for the administration.

In the first year of the Trump administration the EPA deleted two sites from the NPL and partially deleted four. The EPA then deleted 18 full sites and four partial sites in 2018. In 2019, EPA deleted 12 full sites and 15 partial sites.
The deletions are the culmination of decades worth of cleanup spanning multiple presidential administrations. The deletion of the Indiana sites does not mean the threat of contamination is over.

DOUGLAS ROAD/UNIROYAL, INC. LANDFILL – MISHAWAKA
The site is located south of Interstate 80, between apartment complexes and shopping centers near W. Douglas Rd. and Grape Rd.

The partial deletion of the Douglas Road/Uniroyal Inc. landfill in Mishawaka could leave several types of contamination behind, a fact that has led local officials to voice their concerns.

The site is located south of Interstate 80, between apartment complexes and shopping centers near W. Douglas Rd. and Grape Rd.

Mishawaka Mayor David A. Wood submitted comments to the EPA in July, telling the NPL deletion coordinator he was concerned about methane emissions building up in landfill gas vent wells.
"The single major issue that appears to be problematic is the presence of methane gas in a few landfill gas vent wells, specifically vent wells LG-4, LG-6, LG-7 and LG-13," Woods wrote. "We consider this situation as imminently hazardous to the safety of the public and are requesting that the vent wells be restored, operated and maintained in perpetuity or until the issue is truly remedied."
Woods also expressed concerns about coal ash contamination at the site, which may have led to elevated levels of arsenic, iron and lead in groundwater monitoring wells.

Those concerns remain, even as the site is deleted from the National Priorities List.
A portion of the letter sent to the EPA by Mishawaka Mayor David A. Wood.

The site was formerly a gravel pit that was later used as a repository for waste from the Uniroyal Plastics, Inc. plant between 1954 and 1979.

The company dumped more than 302,000 gallons of toxic solvents like methyl ethyl ketone, toluene, acetone and hexane, along with dozens of tons of paper, wood stock, rubber and plastic scrap at the landfill for nearly 20 years.
Groundwater contamination was found in 1971, and the Indiana State Board of Health ordered the site closed.

Between 1971 and 1979, the company used the landfill exclusively for coal ash, dumping more than 79,000 tons of fly ash over the years.

Coal ash is toxic waste created by burning coal. It can contain mercury, lead, arsenic and many other metals and elements that could cause cancer, lung and heart problems or death. Fly ash is coal ash ground to a fine powder.
The site was first added to the National Priorities List in 1989. That year, the state of Indiana and Uniroyal, Inc. signed a consent decree wherein the company agreed to perform a remedial investigation and a cleanup feasibility study, but the company filed for bankruptcy in 1991 and would not fulfill its contractual obligations.
In 1994, EPA investigators found a carcinogenic volatile organic compound known as vinyl chloride in six residential wells at levels seven times the amount required for the agency to take action to remove the compound.

Investigators found that groundwater under the landfill was discharging into the nearby Juday Creek, placing about 50 homes at risk for potential contamination.

By 1996, the EPA and the state of Indiana agreed on a plan to address the contamination. The site was split into two 16-acre operating units, OU1 and OU2. About 2,200 cubic yards of contaminated soil was excavated at OU1, and the area was capped. The remedy at OU2 was more complicated, with the plan calling for the installation of five groundwater extraction wells, wetlands and a filter strip to treat wetland effluent.
In 2018, the site was purchased by a Wyoming-based Greener Investment Holdings LLC, which entered into discussions with the EPA in 2019 about its potential future use.
The cleanup plan eventually reduced contamination at the site, although vinyl chloride and arsenic are still being detected at the site.
By May 2020, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management and the EPA agreed that the 1996 cleanup agreement objectives for OU1 had been met, and the EPA began the process for partial NPL deletion the following month.
The EPA told Wood that IDEM would continue to monitor the methane until "it is no longer a threat." The EPA also said that contamination affecting groundwater at the site was due to the OU2, which is not being deleted from the priorities list.
The partial deletion was finalized Sept. 30. OU2 will remain on the National Priorities List until groundwater meets federal and state maximum contaminant levels for arsenic and other contaminants.

FORT WAYNE REDUCTION DUMP – FORT WAYNE
The Fort Wayne Reduction Dump site, located at 5225 Old Maumee Rd. in Fort Wayne.

The Fort Wayne Reduction Dump was formerly farmland that was turned into a landfill in 1967. The dump accepted residential and industrial waste between 1967 and 1976.

The dump's owners, Fort Wayne Reduction, Inc., kept few records of the types of waste accepted at the site, but what is known is that waste was processed in incinerators at the site until 1970. The ashes that remained were disposed of on-site.

In 1970, the company changed its name to National Recycling Corp. and dabbled in recycling, building a recycling plant that was active for about five years. The company's main operation was the solid waste landfill that accepted industrial and municipal waste, industrial liquids and sludge.

According to the EPA, the company began collecting barrels of liquid waste and dug a 40-foot-by-60-foot pit for storage of the liquids.
Drums containing chemicals of all types were brought to the dump, including some the ISBH categorized as volatile, chemical or hazardous wastes. The drum lids would be cut off and the contents dumped into the pit, creating a pool of toxic liquids.

A later EPA analysis found that the landfill had accepted more than 141,000 gallons of volatile industrial liquids, toxic 2,4-dimethyl phenol, methylene chloride, arsenic and toxic sludge.

EPA map of soil types at the site.

The site was added to the NPL in 1986, and the EPA said there was no evidence of contamination or contamination threat to the nearby River Haven community, although there was evidence of contaminants migrating into the Maumee River through groundwater discharge.
The EPA and IDEM agreed to clean up the 35-acre site by digging up and incinerating tens of thousands of chemical-filled drums from the site and capping the entire landfill area, known as OU1 and OU2.
OU1 and OU2, the two landfill areas, have met the cleanup objectives put in place in 1986 and were deleted from the NPL on Sept. 30. OU3, the groundwater portion of the site, has not been determined to meet final cleanup goals.

Capping at the site does not eliminate contamination. It only prevents the contamination from spreading as long as the cap holds.

Caps at the site were installed in 1991 and 1994 and are approaching 30 years of use. The EPA has said that in-situ caps like these are "conceptually built to last forever," but, the agency does not have data on how low-probability events, like a 500-year storm, could affect them.

Parts of the Fort Wayne Reduction Dump fall within the 100-year floodplain of the Maumee River.

The Fort Wayne Reduction Dump is located within the 100-year floodplain of the Maumee River.

Climate change has made once-rare severe weather events much more likely to happen.
The U.S. Government Accountability Office found that the dump was one of 25 Superfund sites in Indiana that face the highest flood risk.

Average annual precipitation in the Fort Wayne area is rising, and the risk of contamination at the dump spreading continues.

U.S. SMELTER AND LEAD REFINERY, INC. SITE – EAST CHICAGO
USS Lead site in East Chicago.

The U.S. Smelter and Lead Refinery, Inc. site housed a lead refining facility from 1920 to 1972 and later became a secondary lead smelter until 1985.

The EPA has found evidence of toxic and persistent heavy metals, lead, lead slag and other chemicals permeating soil and spilling into surface and ground water at and around the U.S. Smelter and Lead Refinery, Inc. facility since the early 1980s.

According to EPA investigators, workers at the facility appeared to "casually" haul large amounts of lead flue dust in front end loaders from five 6,000-ton piles, resulting in large amounts of the dust spilling into the facility grounds or being carried off by the wind.

Soil samples taken at the facility were found to contain as much as 16% lead, and a chemical analysis found lead flowing from the plant at 3,400 parts per billion, or hundreds of times the amount needed for environmental and health authorities to take action.

The investigators concluded that the local population was being exposed to contamination through the flue dust and lead pollution from the facility entering drainage ditches and moving into the Grand Calumet River.

The facility stopped operating in December 1985, but the pollution threat continued. EPA inspectors in March 1986 found the facility in a "state of complete despair," with the facility's manager telling the inspectors that disposal of a toxic pile of lead flue dust was "impossible because the company was bankrupt."
Eventually, only a single employee, the company's bookkeeper, was left at the site. He told IDEM inspectors that all utility services were stopped at the facility due to nonpayment and that people started breaking in to the facility to steal equipment and recyclable metals.
IDEM eventually took legal action against the company, forcing it to pay a $55,000 fine, create a closure plan and take other actions to prevent pollution.
In 1992, the EPA first proposed adding the facility to the National Priorities List. As part of the process the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry prepared a health assessment report in 1994, finding that lead and other contamination was present at least a half mile from the site and in surface water and sediments. The report also revealed that the state of Indiana had indications people living near the area may have been exposed to lead contamination for years.

The Indiana State Board of Health conducted lead screening for 53 children in East Chicago in 1985, finding that two of the children had "moderately increased blood lead levels" that could not be explained.

The ISDH in 1996 asked the disease registry to help it conduct a lead exposure investigation, singling out areas near the USS Lead site.

"After a review of the EPA 1985 off-site soil lead concentrations, the ISDH and ATSDR determined that the West Calumet and Calumet communities are the populations at greatest risk to exposure to elevated lead levels," the health department said in a report.

The agencies held free blood lead screenings for people living in the area for two days. They tested 95 people, including 30 children. Ten of those children had elevated blood levels.

The agencies concluded the children were exposed to lead contamination either through lead-based paint or lead-contaminated soil. ISDH recommended conducting follow up investigations.
The sites now occupied by the school and the West Calumet Housing Complex were identified by the EPA as the former site of several separate lead smelting operations, the International Lead Refining Plant, owned by a subsidiary of the Anaconda Copper Mining Company, and a white lead unit owned by the Eagle-Picher Co.

The Times of Northwest Indiana found the former Anaconda site was sold to the School City of East Chicago in 1956, and the properties that eventually became the West Calumet Housing Complex were acquired by the East Chicago Housing Authority in 1970. The Anaconda lead factory building were demolished that same year.

IDEM tested surface soil at the school and the West Calumet Housing Complex July 1997 after the EPA noticed ongoing construction at the school. One of five soil samples from the school had lead levels above 400 parts per million. A second batch of samples confirmed the finding. Neither of two samples collected from the housing complex showed "levels of concern."

An independent study commissioned by U.S. Smelter and Lead Refinery, Inc. concluded that the company's air emissions likely did impact surrounding soil, but to a much lesser degree than other facilities in the area. Instead of being added to the National Priorities List, the USS Lead facility was designated a Corrective Action Management Unit two years after the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry report. The designation allowed the EPA to clean up the facility and store contaminants onsite and monitor it for 30 years.

In 2008, the EPA found that 11 homes had lead levels above 1,200 parts per million, the EPA's regulatory removal action level. Over time, the EPA found more contamination in nearby homes.
The USS Lead site was added to the NPL in 2009, and the EPA began to investigate the extent of the lead contamination. More properties were found to be contaminated, and the EPA and IDEM decided on a cleanup plan for the site in 2012.
The EPA would excavate soil from contaminated properties and replace it with clean fill. Efforts continued over years, and more residences were found to have contamination.

In 2016, the West Calumet Housing Complex in Zone 1 of OU1 was found to have lead contamination, with some samples from nearby yards showing lead levels over 70 times the U.S. safety standard. Blood samples from children living in the area showed high blood lead levels.
The apartment complex was closed and demolished, and more than 1,000 residents were forced to find new housing.

The former site of the housing complex is still on the NPL, but local authorities and the EPA are planning on Zone 1's future.

East Chicago Mayor Anthony Copeland sold the 49-acre site to a company that plans to develop the site into a logistics and distribution campus and warehousing complex.

The East Chicago city council rezoned the site from residential to light industrial use in hopes of a future removal from the NPL.
The EPA deleted 671 residences in Zones 2 and 3 from the NPL on Sept. 30.

The EPA deleted 671 residences in Zones 2 and 3 from the NPL on Sept. 30, saying the properties were cleaned up to standards set in 2012. The agency said the soil at the properties "poses no unacceptable risk to human health and the environment."

The deletion allows the city to redevelop vacant lots.

It's unclear whether the East Chicago city government will move to rezone the recently deleted properties.

Out Of The Ashes II – The Coal Ash Threat In NSW
https://www.solarquotes.com.au/blog/coal-ash-nsw-mb1727/
October 20, 2020 by Michael Bloch

A report released by Hunter Community Environment Centre (HCEC) yesterday estimates 100 tonnes of harmful heavy metals leach into NSW waterways every year from coal ash waste in four regions.

Ash produced from coal fired power generation is claimed to be Australia's third largest waste stream, representing 20% of this nation's total domestic waste. Far from being an inert sort of waste, it's a toxic cocktail containing various heavy metals and other chemicals.

None of the operating coal ash dumps in New South Wales are lined with an impermeable membrane, which means contaminants leach into surrounding ground and surface water when water in the ash slurries and rain seeps through.

HCEC's Out Of The Ashes II report estimates the five operating coal-fired power stations in NSW collectively generate about 4.8 million tonnes of coal ash a year, and dump approximately 3.8 million tonnes into on-site ash dams, placement areas or mine voids. Add to this ash from decommissioned power stations and the total coal ash waste accumulated in New South Wales is put at around 216 million tonnes currently. All of the sites are claimed to be responsible for water contamination.

The problem isn't something that can be solved just by switching to renewable energy. As with other issues with coal, this legacy will remain with us for a very long time.

HCEC says the New South Wales Government has been aware of extensive contamination issues at all coal ash dumps in the state for at least 7 years – through a 2014 NSW Treasury report.

Vales Point – Just Freaking Toxic

No matter how you look at it, Delta Electricity's coal-fired clunker Vales Point Power Station is an environmental nightmare. Its associated ash dump is one of a number put in the spotlight in the Out Of The Ashes II report, which states it is the largest in New South Wales – containing an estimated 60 million tonnes of waste.

The Vales Point ash dump is thought to have leached 720 tonnes of heavy metals into Lake Macquarie since it was commissioned in the 1960's and will pollute the lake with another 96 tonnes of heavy metals before it is (perhaps) retired in 2029. As well as exceeding maximum background concentrations for heavy metals including zinc, selenium, cobalt and lead, the report claims the ash dump is a primary source of arsenic and selenium in groundwater.

Vales Point has been in news recently after having been tapped for a Federal Government grant – and then just days later copping a (paltry) fine from the EPA for unrelated waste and pollution offences.

The threats posed by other ash dumps in New South Wales highlighted in the report includes those associated with Eraring, Liddell, Bayswater and Mt Piper power stations.

Fixing The Coal Ash Dump Problem

While carrying a toxic payload, coal ash isn't entirely useless. One of its low-risk applications is in concrete products – but not enough of it is being used.

With that in mind and the accusation the NSW Government is liable for the majority of coal ash related pollution, the report makes 9 recommendations; including:
The NSW Government commits to decontaminating all coal ash waste dumps in the state.
The NSW Government adopts policies ensuring a substantial proportion of concrete purchased or as part of its tenders contains coal ash products.
The NSW EPA undertake an investigation into coal ash generated in NSW to determine environmental risks associated with all uses.

The EPA imposes a load based licence fee of at least $20 a tonne on all coal ash disposed of in ash dams, landfills, and mine voids.
The NSW EPA strictly enforces ANZECC water quality guidelines.

The full Out Of The Ashes II report can be viewed here, or a summary here.

It's not just the HCEC that has expressed concern about coal ash dumps – in July last year Environmental Justice Australia called them a ticking time bomb.

Washington State Provides Hazardous Waste Updates for Business
https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/washington-state-provides-hazardous-14376/
By Lucy Infeld
19 Oct 2020

On September 30, 2020, the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) adopted updates to its Dangerous Waste Regulations, Chapter 173-303 WAC. These updates go into effect on October 31, 2020.

The updated regulations set standards for safely managing dangerous wastes. Many of the updates involve further guidance for businesses in Washington who deal with hazardous waste materials. Some of the regulations were required updates to remain consistent with EPA regulations under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). Ecology also adopted several state-initiated amendments to its rules.

The main federal rules adopted under this update are:
Management Standards for Hazardous Waste Pharmaceuticals and Amendments to the P075 Listing for Nicotine.
These updates apply to retail stores, pharmacies, and healthcare facilities, however, the rules do not apply to households.
These changes were made to make Washington State rules consistent with EPA regulations. Under the EPA, while concentrated nicotine is very toxic and subject to strict regulations, over-the-counter nicotine replacement therapies with low concentrations of nicotine, including patches, gum, and lozenges, will no longer be managed as an acute hazardous waste.
Safe Management of Recalled Airbags.
These rules apply to auto dealers, scrap recyclers, salvage yards, auto repair shops, and other small businesses that remove recalled airbags from vehicles and dispose of them.
Recalled airbags removed from vehicles are ignitable and reactive, making them extremely dangerous to handle. These rules allow for airbag waste collected to be exempt from dangerous waste regulations, as long as certain conditions are met, namely sending the waste to an airbag waste collection facility or to a RCRA permitted dangerous waste facility.

Ecology also adopted an update based on federal user fees for the electronic hazardous waste manifest system, including amendments to the manifest regulations.

The main state-initiated amendments include:
Updating Biological Testing Methods for the Designation of Dangerous Waste.
Previously, biological testing in Washington State allowed for two types of testing: the static fish acute toxicity test and the acute oral rat toxicity test. Ecology has determined that the rat toxicity test is obsolete and have removed it from the regulations.
Instead, the static fish acute toxicity test, which has been in use for over 40 years to determine whether solid waste is a dangerous waste under state regulations based on toxicity. This test does not relate to human health

criteria. Updates to the regulations will allow the fish toxicity test procedures to be more efficient for labs testing these potentially dangerous wastes.

Ecology also made other clarifications and corrections to the rules, which can be viewed here. In addition to the language of the rules, Ecology provides guidance on its regulations and rule interpretations.

Most notably, in June 2020, Ecology published an updated reference guide, which summarizes the requirements for each generator category under the Dangerous Waste Regulations. Hazardous waste handlers and small business owners in Washington should review all regulations carefully to ensure they are complying with all conditions and standards for hazardous waste, even if they believe they are operating under an exemption.

Advocates Applaud New EPA Permit For State Fish Hatchery Accused Of River Pollution
https://www.nhpr.org/post/advocates-applaud-new-epa-permit-state-fish-hatchery-accused-river-pollution#stream/0
By ANNIE ROPEIK • 6 MINUTES AGO
19 Oct 2020

A new federal water permit is out for a state fish hatchery in New Durham that's accused, in a federal lawsuit, of polluting waters that feed into Lake Winnipesaukee.

The long-awaited permit could prompt costly upgrades at the Powder Mill Fish Hatchery, the state's largest, in the next several years.

The lawsuit, from the Conservation Law Foundation, claims the hatchery's discharge of nutrient-rich fish waste has degraded the Merrymeeting River above Alton Bay – driving harmful algae blooms, depressing property values and limiting recreation.

The state Departments of Fish & Game and Environmental Services argue that the facility has been discharging that waste in compliance with a federal permit that, until now, was years overdue for an update.

The new permit lowers – by about half – the EPA's initially proposed limit on how much phosphorus the hatchery can put into the river, from 25 to 12 parts per billion year-round.

This has been a key part of pollution concerns from people like state Rep. Michael Harrington, a Republican from Strafford who joined local experts and neighbors in submitting hundreds of pages of detailed comments to the EPA on its draft permit for the hatchery.

"These people busted their hump on this – I mean, hundreds and hundreds of hours," Harrington says. "There were people out there... who take water samples all the time – just constant. These people are dedicated to this."

He says EPA officials told him the "quality" of those comments convinced them to lower the phosphorus limit in the final permit.

If no appeal is filed in the next month, the permit will take effect at the start of 2021. After that, Harrington says the state will be able to finalize plans for upgrading the hatchery's wastewater system.

He says Fish & Game estimated that upgrade would cost $4 to $5 million, under the higher draft phosphorus limit. The new, lower limit may change that figure.

Harrington says he's considering bringing back a proposal he'd made for an increased trout stamp fee to help fund the upgrades. That bill did not pass when he first filed it last year.

Either way, he expects Fish & Game to seek funding for the new water system in next year's state capital budget, meaning design and installation could be completed within five years.

In the meantime, the state has taken short-term steps to clean up the hatchery's discharge – including changing to a lower-phosphorus fish food, moving some fish to other hatcheries, and storing waste for land application as fertilizer instead of putting it into the river.

Advocates say they're seeing preliminary signs that this may be improving water quality.

Harrington says that's especially encouraging given the state's ongoing severe drought, which has meant almost all water flowing into the Merrymeeting River is passing through the hatchery.

DeKalb County to pay $1-million-plus penalty in lengthy consent agreement extension
https://prism-dekalb.blogspot.com/2020/10/dekalb-county-to-pay-1-million-plus.html
Monday, October 19, 2020

DeKalb County would pay a more than $1 million penalty and risk paying increased fines under a proposed federal court settlement that would give the county another 7 1/2 years to satisfy a 2011 consent decree to reduce sewer spills, county officials said Monday.

Calling the proposed modification to the consent decree "a compromise we can all be proud of," DeKalb County CEO Michael Thurmond said "we are poised now to continue a decade of renewal in our county."

Deputy County Attorney Matthew Welch, the county's lead negotiator handling the decree, said the county will get a "7 1/2-year extension with completion of rehabilitation in the priority sewer areas." The county had already been given 8 1/2 to 9 years to do this work, he said.

"There will be increased oversight and enhanced reporting to EPA and EPD and the federal court," Welch said, referring to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division. That would include a new requirement that regular reports be submitted directly to federal court.

He said the county would be required to pay a $1,047,000 civil penalty "based both on the number of spills that we have experienced in the county since the consent decree" and the county's failure to meet the decree's requirements.

Welch said there would be "increased stipulated penalties covering more areas moving forward." The county would also be required to address, in the next four years, a majority of 103 new sites where sewage spills have repeatedly occurred that will be added to the consent decree.

Maria Houser, the county's director of consent decree and environmental compliance, said the proposed agreement would include a "capacity assurance program" to deal with the problems of sewer capacity for new development.

Welch said the program "provides a new potential path to allow connections ... as work on the system is completed."

"It allows us to bank credits as work is completed," Welch said. "As we complete work we take a certain amount of that credit and we mete it out to the public. The remainder is held by the county and becomes a buffer."

"We have accomplished certain tasks," Houser said, including removal of 2,910 tons of debris removed via cleaning, inspection of 6,325 creek crossings, treatment of 435 miles of sewer pipes for root control and the clearing of 20 million square feet of easements.

She said the county has lined 133 miles of pipe, conducted spot repairs on 28 miles of pipe and increased the size of 35 miles of sewer pipe.

To county will obtain low-interest loans to pay for $438 million in work, which will predominantly relate to the Snapfinger wastewater treatment facility and basin. One loan, from an EPA program, will provide $265 million. The Georgia Environmental Finance Authority will also loan money to DeKalb County.

Thurmond said the proposed agreement would allow the county to do a better job of providing sewer connections for new businesses. He said it would create an estimated 1,891 jobs in the county through 2026 "because of the capacity assurance program."

"Currently we have 379 pending applications for approval," Thurmond said. "This investment and our work will serve a population that is expected to grow to over 900,000 residents by 2050."

"It's a great day in DeKalb County," Thurmond said.

Even though the announcement was billed as a "virtual town hall meeting," members of the public were not allowed to comment or directly ask questions. Questions were read out without identifying who had asked them.

Thurmond and other officials answered questions selectively. They ignored a question asking how much DeKalb County has paid in fines and did not answer whether air-quality monitoring would begin to measure odors from sewer lines.

Hausser said work has been delayed because of a "tremendous amount of rain over the summer." The National Weather Service says Atlanta received 149 percent of its normal rainfall during the last 90 days.

The consent decree stems from a 2010 court case filed by federal and state environmental agencies over sewer spills that occurred between 2006 and 2010.

EPA Allows Coal Ash Ponds to Stay Open Despite Court Order
https://www.ecowatch.com/epa-coal-ash-ponds-court-order-2648375248.html?rebelltitem=3#rebelltitem3
By Jordan Davidson
19 Oct 2020

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a rule change on Friday that will allow some coal power plants to ignore a court order to clean up coal ash ponds, which leech toxic materials into soil and groundwater. The rule change will allow some coal ash ponds to stay open for years while others that have no barrier to protect surrounding areas are allowed to stay open indefinitely, according to the AP.

The arsenic-laced sludge that fills coal ash ponds is likely to leak when just a plastic barrier protects it. It is far more likely to pollute nearby soil and water when the pits have a clay barrier, according to researchers, as The Hill reported.

A 2018 order from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit had forced the EPA to close coal ash ponds that did not have plastic lining and were likely to leak toxic chemicals, making Friday's rule change seem like a blatant move to undermine the court's authority, according to environmental groups who promised to sue to stop the rule change, as The Hill reported.

Environmentalists argue that the rule change is a favor to the coal industry, for which EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler served as a lobbyist prior to joining the Trump administration. The move allows the industry to dump its byproducts inexpensively and irresponsibly.

"The reason the utilities are arguing to keep the ponds is because they have put in these unlined pits out the back door of the power plant that act as a catchall for their toxic waste," said Lisa Evans, an attorney for the environmental group Earthjustice, as the AP reported. "They don't want to get rid of them because they are cheap."

Earthjustice and the Environmental Integrity Project commissioned a study on coal ash ponds and found that 91 percent of them were leaking toxic chemicals beyond what was permitted by EPA regulations, as The Hill reported. Their study found that heavy metals from the waste was polluting nearby drinking wells and groundwater.

Coal ash is produced when coal is burned to produce power. It is full of arsenic, mercury, lead and several other hazardous heavy metals. In the U.S., coal plants create nearly 100 million tons annually of ash and other waste, according to the AP.

"When ponds without lining leak, it's often more aggressive, faster and harder to control," said Evans, as The Hill reported. "Utilities are asking for favors and exemptions and EPA is willing to give them and is willing to rush to provide these exemptions."

The 2018 court decision found that clay lined coal ash ponds, or unlined ponds, are simply dangerous, as the AP reported.

Evans noted that the Obama-era Resource Conservation and Recovery Act required power plants to close unlined coal-ash ponds by April 2019, but the EPA keeps extending the deadline, as the AP reported.

By rewriting the rule, coal plants are able to get around the mandates of the 2015 Resource Conservation and Recovery Act by simply showing that their coal ash ponds pose no threat to human health.

"The Trump EPA is flouting the court's decision," said Evans, as the AP reported. "I've never seen anything like this before."

EXECUTIVE ORDER ON MODERNIZING AMERICA'S WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND WATER INFRASTRUCTURE SIGNED
https://www.wwdmag.com/legislation/executive-order-modernizing-americas-water-resource-management-and-water-infrastructure
BY CRISTINA TUSER

OCT 19, 2020

President Trump signed an executive order on "Modernizing America's Water Resource Management and Water Infrastructure."

President Trump recently signed an Executive Order on "Modernizing America's Water Resource Management and Water Infrastructure."

This ensures Federal coordination on water policy is standard practice now and into the future by formally establishing a Water Subcabinet of senior Federal agency officials, according to the White House. The subcabinet intends to facilitate efficient management and modernization of water supplies and systems while also eliminating duplication between agencies.

The Water Subcabinet will be co-chaired by the U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary David Bernhardt and U.S. EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler. It will include senior officials from the U.S. The Department of Agriculture, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Energy, and the Department of the Army, reported the Department of Energy.

"This order will ensure that agencies do that more efficiently and effectively to improve our country's water resource management, modernize our water infrastructure, and prioritize the availability of clean, safe, and reliable water supplies," said the White House.

The Water Subcabinet will also work in close coordination with senior officials from the White House Council on Environmental Quality, the Office of Management and Budget, the Office of Science and Technology Policy and other federal agencies as appropriate.

Under the Executive Order the Water Subcabinet will:
Promote effective and efficient water resources management by reducing duplication between Federal agencies developing water policy;
Develop a national water strategy to ensure the reliability of water supplies, water quality, water systems, and water forecasting;
Protect taxpayer investments and improve water infrastructure planning by promoting integrated planning and coordination for drinking water, wastewater, water reuse, water storage and delivery, and water resource management; and
Support and enhance workforce development to recruit, train, and retain water sector professionals.

Where We Live: Portland Harbor Superfund Site
https://www.koin.com/news/environment/where-we-live-portland-harbor-superfund-site/
by: Ken Boddie
Posted: Oct 19, 2020 / 01:00 PM PDT / Updated: Oct 18, 2020 / 02:03 PM PDT

PORTLAND, Ore. (KOIN) — You would never know it from the surface, but underneath the water of the Willamette River in downtown Portland, there's a huge problem. Twenty years ago, the Environmental Protection Agency designated a ten-mile stretch of the lower Willamette—between the Broadway Bridge and Sauvie Island—as seriously contaminated.

Called the Portland Harbor Superfund Site, it is the biggest of 13 superfund sites in Oregon, and about 1,300 nationwide.

Willamette River tops list of toxic waterways

“You know, sites like this that receive the designation of Superfund receive that designation because they are some of the most-contaminated, largest, complex sites in the county, and this site is no exception,” explained Caleb Shaffer of the EPA.

An undated photo of industrial plants along the Willamette River. (Courtesy Oregon DEQ)

It all goes back to the Willamette River’s industrial past in the early-to-mid 1900s. Shipbuilding and repair, lumber mills, chemical plants, and steel foundries dumped everything from PCBs to pesticides into the river. The chemicals settled into the sediment and riverbanks, posing a danger to humans and wildlife.

Stricter environmental regulations, the Big Pipe Sewer Project completed in 2011, and the passage of time now make the Willamette River mostly safe to swim in.

A map of the Portland Harbor Superfund Cleanup. (Courtesy City of Portland)

“The primary risk in this area is really fish consumption, and that’s why we have active restrictions in place because of that risk,” said Shaffer.

The EPA said the Portland Harbor Superfund site cleanup will cost more than a billion dollars and take 13 years—paid for by the 150 companies responsible for dumping the contaminants. The planning is underway for dredging and replacing some 3 million cubic yards of contaminated sediment and riverbank. That’s equivalent to filling up 100,000 garbage trucks. And it’s all in an effort to reclaim and restore the river that helps define downtown Portland.

Where We Live: Accessing the Willamette River

The EPA is responsible for enforcement and oversight of the superfund cleanup, with support from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, and Native American tribes, among others.